

CHAIRMAN`S REPORT LECALÉ CONSERVATION 23 NOVEMBER 2023

On behalf of the members of Lecale Conservation Association, I bid welcome to everyone here tonight, for the 2023 AGM of our Society.

During the past 12 months we have re-established and consolidated the activities of Lecale Conservation. We endeavour to protect the natural and historical environment of the Barony of Lecale, we support ethical and sustainable land and marine management, we lobby and engage with the appropriate Authorities.

We can offer advice encouragement and help to other communities and individuals who might have problems of an environmental nature.

In the last 12 months, we have seen the establishment of a dynamic Youth Members` group

who have engaged in a Climate Change study group, designed our new website and have challenged our local Council over its poor response to Climate Change.

The BLUE EARTH ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMIT 2023 was held in Bristol and it was attended by three members of the Youth Group.

Lecale Conservation has some important ongoing responsibilities... The Ballyhornan sand dune reclamation contract will be completed next Spring. This work, involving procurement and planting of specialised grasses, has been recognised by Council and by National Trust as Exemplary. A further, much more ambitious, project at Tyrella dunes has been funded and preliminary groundworks are complete.

We will have to organise a great deal of planting work, and I suggest that we make plans to involve organisations such as GAA, Scouts, sports clubs..... and the like, to tackle the work in manageable stages.

We continue to press for action in the matters of rights-of-way at Rossglass and Hollymount among other sites, and we have an input into other planning cases.

The flooding of Downpatrick Market Street and the devastation at ASDA and the Railway works should be a wakeup call for people to become involved in environmental activity.

Lecale Conservation should be well placed to help or to advise.

We maintain links with NICVA SLLP, NIEL. PAW, FOE, NIEA, and of course with our old friends the Planning Service.

Our Youth Group and Dune repair activities have been featured on local and national media.

As a Registered Charity, our first Annual Report will be due next January.

Our Bank Account has some Signatory business to be tidied up.

We continue to receive an annual bequest on behalf of the late passionate environmentalist Marie Lee, and I would like to see some accessible acknowledgement of her long-term engagement with the beaches of Lecale.

As I see things at present, the priorities of our Society are to widen the membership, not only by recruiting middle aged Full Members, but also to form links with members of other organisations who would be welcome as Affiliated Members.

May I in closing acknowledge the patient and conscientious assistance I have had from Hon. Secretary David Beckett, Hon. Treasurer Cadogan Enright with Brenda at his side, Anne Odling-Smee our Chair Emeritus and our long time fireside host Noel Killen.

We all look forward to the creativity which our Youth Members will contribute next year.

John also also acknowledged the report from the Youth Group following a very active and successful yea with a report prepared by Cathal Quinn

1. 2021 to 2023 Recap

Lecale Conservation Youth Group has slowly been progressing, going from strength to strength. This summer, we successfully launched our website project, focusing on renewable energy. Our all-island interactive map allows you to research your own council's "climate credentials" when it comes to renewable energy. Judging them on a number of factors, councils are ranked accordingly and we aim to use this in conversation with our local council, currently the worst in Northern Ireland. The map is the first of its kind and as such, the website is perfectly placed to gain publicity for Lecale Conservation and our projects, through the website and social media.

2. Summer Successes

Annual Summer 'Climate Camp' returned in 2023, which involved website building, freedom of information requests, financial information management and campaign tools for young people to hold local government authorities to account. This fed into the website project.

Social Media movement - Instagram has been set up to appeal to more people, with 100 new followers in just two months. The Instagram was used as a blog during the youth group's visit to Blue Earth Summit and was well received by followers.

Blue Earth Summit 2023 was attended by Cathal, CadÓg and Maja since the last meeting. The summit was a brilliant experience for the three, despite the flight cancellation at the end! The summit offered vast opportunities to learn, engage and network with a range of groups across the world. The youth group met business leaders like Deborah Meaden, activists like Feargal Sharkey, and made great connections.

3. Youth Membership

There are currently 8 youth members who have been involved in campaigning and protests, and a further 12 have expressed strong interest in joining. This includes an age range of 12 - 18, and people from across the Lecale area with all attending school/college within Downpatrick.

Additional Note

It was agreed by all members that the cost of attendance for three Youth Group representatives to attend the 'Blue Earth Summit' in Bristol would be financed from the general account of Lecale Conservation. The total sum is £360.

Treasurers Report

Cadogan Enright presented the up-to-date accounts, as attached. They were agreed and proposed as correct by David Beckett and seconded by Ruth McCoy.

The members expressed their sincerest thanks to Cadogan for ending the year with such an excellent balance due to his hard work in getting funding.

Election of Officers for the year November 2023 to November 2024

The Officers for the period from 23 November 2022 to 23 November 2023 had resigned and proposals were asked from the Members for their nomination for New Officers until the next AGM in November 2023.

All the Officers agreed to stand again in their respective roles but fully agreed by all those in attendance that there should be a few changes to the structure of Officers.

CHAIRPERSON: The attendees all agreed to nominate **John Peacocke as Chairperson** and this was Proposed by Cadogan Enright and Seconded by Ruth McCoy

VICE CHAIRPERSON: The attendees all agreed to nominate **Noel Killen as Vice Chairperson** and this was Proposed by David Beckett and Seconded by Bill Corry

TREASURER: The attendees all agreed to nominate **Cadogan Enright as Treasure** and was Proposed by Bill Corry and Seconded by Chris Murphy

DEPUTY TREASURER: It was agreed by all members present that a Deputy Treasurer is not required but proposed that **Brenda Enright** should now be appointed as the **External Examiner** and Support Officer for some of the formal matters that she is so able to assist in. Proposed by David Beckett and Seconded by John Peacocke

SECRETARY: The attendees all agreed to nominate **David Beckett as Secretary** and this was Proposed by Chris Murphy and Seconded by Cadogan Enright

DEPUTY SECRETARY: It was agreed by all the members present that a deputy is not required and the Secretary would call on members if assistance required.

YOUTH OFFICERS: It was unanimously agreed that the post of Youth Officers should be established with **Cathal Quinn**, proposed by David Beckett and seconded by Anne Odling-Smee and **CadOg Enright**, proposed by Chris Murphy and seconded by Ruth McCoy, the elected Youth Officers in recognition of all the hard work they have undertaken during the past year.